Q&A
Responses to Inquiries Regarding Dengue Epidemic Declaration
October 10, 2012

Can you please explain, in detail, the situation on the island?

➢ The Puerto Rico Department of Health has issued a statement declaring a dengue epidemic in response to the dengue cases reported in some areas around the island.

➢ This alert is and its goals are to provide information to the health care providers, public health officials, and the general public on how to prepare for the challenges this illness represents.

➢ The information includes ways on how to reduce the possibility of transmission and illness severity in the eventuality of an outbreak on the island.

Is Puerto Rico still accessible for tourists?

➢ Yes, Puerto Rico’s many attractions, resort areas and tourist services have not been affected by this situation. Services relevant to tourists are available including:
  ○ Taxis
  ○ Casinos
  ○ National Parks
  ○ Airport Staff and Maintenance
  ○ Tour Guides
  ○ Municipal Services
  ○ Tourist Information Centers
  ○ Emergency Services (hospital facilities, fire department, police, EMT)

➢ The Puerto Rico Tourism Company is constantly monitoring the situation and in constant communication with the Department of Health.

➢ Protocols have been established in regards to how to handle a situation in which a traveler or guest shows symptoms of the dengue virus. These protocols include airports, cruise ships, and accommodations around the island.

➢ We must point out that the symptoms of the dengue virus in people are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. This may lead to confusion on whether a case is actually flu or common influenza. Only blood tests can confirm it is indeed the dengue virus.
Is it safe for tourists to travel to Puerto Rico?

- Yes. The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia has issued no travel restrictions to Puerto Rico.
- The Puerto Rico Department of Health has issued a statement assuring the public it has taken all the necessary measures to handle and prevent the spread of the dengue epidemic.
- As always, all emergency services are open and prepared to deal with any situation or emergency including hospital facilities, fire department, police and ambulances.

Is the current situation a concern for travelers to Puerto Rico?

- The Government of Puerto Rico, The Department of Health, The Puerto Rico Tourism Company and our industry partners are taking all necessary measures to enable travelers to enjoy their visit to our island.
- No travel advisories or warnings have been issued for travel to and from Puerto Rico at this moment. If such alert is issued for Puerto Rico we will inform the public immediately.
- All ports, airports and taxi services continue to run as usual. All casinos, visitor centers and beaches and parks will remain open for visitors.
- We urge travelers to keep informed and check updated information on the CDC website [http://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/) or by calling the Puerto Rico Health Department dengue hotline, 1-866-805-7777
- PRTC will post any alerts regarding travel to Puerto Rico on its website [www.seepuertorico.com](http://www.seepuertorico.com).

How long is the situation expected to last?

- Reported and confirmed cases are expected to peak during the next weeks.

What is the potential impact on tourism as a result of this issue?

- We must emphasize there is no need for panic as medical supplies and treatment is readily available in the US and Puerto Rico for any more confirmed cases that may arise.
- There has been no impact on tourism in the island. However, we feel this issue could affect the tourism industry as travelers may become more cautious due to the epidemic statement by the Health Department.
We stress that all emergency services (hospital facilities, fire department, police, EMT) are prepared to handle any suspected or confirmed case of dengue fever.

What is the expected impact on the perception of Puerto Rico to tourists based on this crisis?

The outbreak of dengue fever is a tropical health issue that affects many countries. Unfortunately tourists’ perceptions of travel and tourist destinations in general will definitively be altered by the spread of this disease.

The Government of Puerto Rico, The Department of Health, The Puerto Rico Tourism Company and our industry partners are taking all necessary measures to enable travelers to enjoy their visit our island.

No travel advisories or warnings have been issued for travel to and from Puerto Rico at this moment. If such alert is issued for Puerto Rico we will inform the public immediately.

What will Puerto Rico do to keep tourism numbers up during and after this crisis is resolved?

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company will remain in constant communication with the Puerto Rico Department of Health and continue to monitor any travel advisories issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and take appropriate measures to minimize the effect of this outbreak on travel to the island.

PRTC will continue to reach out to consumers as usual through their consistent marketing, promotions, advertising, and public relations efforts. If changes occur, up to date information on the situation will be posted for travelers on the www.SeePuertoRico.com website so they can make informed choices regarding their travel arrangements and check if any of the services provided by the hospitality industry will be affected while visiting the island.

Puerto Rico will communicate the island’s current safety level, numerous attractions and tourist services available through continued advertising, increased promotions and greater availability of vacation packages to consumers.